



More info:

Santa Clara County Vector Control District:

800-314-2427 or 408-792-5010

<http://www.sccvector.org>

<http://westnile.ca.gov>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile>

<http://www.sccphd.org>



**Public Health Department**

Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital System



**Santa Clara Valley  
Water District**

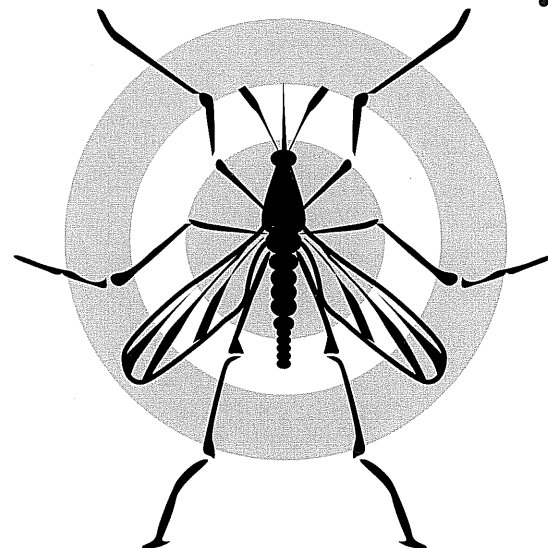


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# WEST NILE VIRUS:

Target the source.



*Protect yourself and your family*



### West Nile virus – What is it?

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne virus, carried in the female mosquito. Although new to the U.S., West Nile virus has been found for several years in parts of Asia, eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. First detected in the United States in 1999 in New York City, West Nile virus was reported in 28 states by the end of 2001 and continued its move westward in 2002. California reported its first human case in September 2002 although it is unclear how or where the patient acquired West Nile virus since no infected birds or mosquitoes were detected prior to or following the detection of the case.

### Who is affected by West Nile virus?

Humans and animals, including birds may all be affected by West Nile virus. The majority of people and animals infected with the virus have mild or no symptoms.

Those most at risk are the elderly and those who have compromised or weakened immune systems.

### What are the symptoms of West Nile virus infection?

Most people who are infected with the West Nile virus will not experience any type of illness. Mild symptoms include fever, headache and body aches, occasionally with a skin rash on the trunk of the body and swollen lymph glands. Symptoms of mild illness will generally last a few days. Severe symptoms of West Nile encephalitis or meningitis include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness and paralysis. Symptoms of severe illness may last several weeks, although neurological effects may be permanent. It is estimated that 1 in 150 persons infected with the West Nile virus will develop a more severe form of the illness.

### How does West Nile virus spread?

West Nile virus is normally spread to humans, animals and birds through the bite of an infected mosquito. A mosquito first acquires the infection by feeding on a bird already infected with West Nile virus. The virus lives in the mosquito and is then transmitted through the mosquito's saliva when it bites a person or an animal.



Birds are "reservoir hosts," meaning the virus can survive in the bird's blood system and through the bite of a mosquito, be spread to humans and animals, including other birds. Humans and other mammals are considered "incidental" or "dead-end" hosts, meaning that mosquitoes biting infected humans cannot spread the infection to other humans or animals.

Although rare, West Nile virus has been transmitted through blood transfusions, organ donations and breast milk.

### What can I do to protect myself and my family from being bitten by mosquitoes?

- When possible, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants whenever you are outdoors.
- Place mosquito netting over infant carriers when you are outdoors with babies.
- Consider staying indoors at dawn, dusk and in the early evening, which are peak mosquito-biting times.
- Install or repair tight-fitting window and door screens so that mosquitoes cannot get indoors.
- Apply insect repellent in moderation to exposed skin. Choose a repellent that contains DEET (*N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide* or *N, N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide*) in a concentration that provides protection for the amount of time that you will be outdoors. **Whenever you use an insecticide or insect repellent, be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's DIRECTIONS FOR USE, as printed on the product.** Avoid applying repellent to the hands of children.
- Spray clothing with repellents containing permethrin since mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing. **Do not apply repellents containing permethrin directly to exposed skin.**

NOTE: Vitamin B-1 and "ultrasonic" devices are NOT effective in preventing mosquito bites.